



## Concerts : Droll song-chaser Snider bares his feet

BY JACK W. HILL

### ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

It's too late to die young, sings Todd Snider in his song, "Age Like Wine," where he acknowledges his status as "an old-timer" after a 15-year career in music. The song is the opening cut on his latest CD, *East Nashville Skyline*, which he playfully named in tribute to one of his influences, Bob Dylan, whose 1969 album, *Nashville Skyline*, helped steer the rock 'n' roll generation to a willingness to also listen to country music.

The album, released almost a year ago, made it onto a number of "best of 2004" lists, including those compiled by *The Associated Press*, *Rollingstone.com*, *www.Pitchforkmedia.com*, the *Austin Chronicle* and the *Nashville Tennessean*.

The easygoing Snider has no complaints about mistreatment by the music industry during his career, despite having had seven managers and five record labels, as he relates in that first song.

"I've never had something I wanted that I couldn't go get," he quips. "I haven't been s\*\*\*\*\*! 'Cause I don't give a s\*\*\*!"

Known as much for his quirky humor as for his songs, Snider sings about all of his adventures in life, including those with drugs, alcohol, jail and having been saved by a songwriter mentor, Billy Joe Shaver, from getting shot. To repay the favor, he includes Shaver's "Good News Blues," and notes that "a cut on one of my albums should make him dozens of dollars."

And Snider met his artist wife, Melita, while both were in a rehabilitation facility.

"I'm glad I went," Snider says. "We've been together seven years and married for five. We met each other at our worst, but it seemed like a good place where we were. Getting married hasn't really altered my viewpoint. I never was a girl chaser, just a song chaser."

Snider's song chasing has earned him recognition from a lengthy list of his musical peers, if no staggering sales figures of his own. Garth Brooks recorded Snider's "Beer Run" and other Snider songs have been recorded by Jerry Jeff Walker, Jimmy Buffett and Mark Chesnutt, making trips to the mailbox one of his favorite things to do, earning money while others record his creations.

Snider first attracted attention with his 1994 national label debut, *Songs for the Daily Planet*, which took its name from a Memphis bar where Snider gradually built his craft.

Oddly, the attention came because of a song added at the last minute and not even listed on the album. The song, "Talkin' Seattle Grunge Rock Blues," came out at a time when humorous singer-songwriters like Snider were out of favor with the masses.

He threw in his lot with John Prine's label, Oh Boy, in 2000, and the label released his Happy to Be Here that year, New Connection in 2002, Near Truths and Hotel Rooms in 2003 and his latest a year ago. Besides label mates, he and Prine have also become friends and collaborators. Snider recorded Prine's "Crooked Piece of Time" and Prine sang on the tune.

"I know more about his songs than he does," Snider laughs. "I'll tell him what cut on what album each of his songs were, and we just got to appear together when Kris Kristofferson was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. I got to sing 'Me and Bobby McGee' and John sang Kris' 'Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down.'"

The down side of going, he adds, was that he had to wear shoes, something he hates to do. "But I don't have to put my shoes on very much, if it's not too cold."

(For his show at Juanita's, Snider will be doing "an evening with" format, where there's no opening act and he will be performing solo. The club will sell only 200 tickets, and the seating will be theaterstyle, open to those age 18 and over.)

**TODD SNIDER** 10 p.m. today,  
Juanita's, 13th and Main streets

**Admission:**

\$15

(501) 374-3271 8 p.m. Saturday, Dickson Theater, 227 W. Dickson St., Fayetteville

**Admission:**

\$12 advance, \$15 day of show

(479) 575-0500